

Karaikal Carnival draws scores of revelers on Pongal holiday

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Thousands of revelers throng Karaikal Indoor Stadium to participate in Karaikal Carnival on Tuesday | antony fernandoIT

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Express News Service

KARAIKAL: Lakhs of people thronged the indoor stadium here over the last three days as the four-day Karaikal Carnival - organised after a seven-year hiatus - has been inviting visitors from all quarters to spend their Pongal holidays in the midst of sports events and flower shows.

The festival was inaugurated by Puducherry Tourism Minister K Lakshminarayanan on Sunday. Karaikal Carnival, a festival jointly organised by the district administration of Karaikal and the Puducherry Tourism Department, aims to boost local business and improve tourism.

The festival has been scheduled from January 15 to 18. On the second day of the festival, a catamaran race was organised at Arasalaru River. Fisherfolk from Kalikuppam hamlet secured the first place in the event. Rekla races and other athletic events were conducted too.

Meanwhile, visitors attending the carnival were in for a treat for the eyes as flower exhibitions and dog shows awaited them at the indoor stadium here. Cultural events and concerts were held as part of the carnival.

A Raja, an engineer from Nagapattinam who took part in the carnival with his family, said they relished every moment of it. "It was a spectacular treat," Raja said, while K Senbagam, a homemaker from Karaikal, enmeshed in exultation, longed for the event to happen every year. Food stalls vending Chinese food, snacks and ice creams will function throughout the four days.

S Vijayakumar, a storekeeper at a cooperative milk stall at the carnival venue, said the milk stall netted profit worth thousand rupees, courtesy of the record crowd. "Sales peaked on the day of Kaanum Pongal," Vijayakumar said. Mohammed Ali, a 21-year-old trader hailing from Assam, said, "I came all the way from my hometown to Karaikal in the hopes of making profits.

Fortunately, I've been doing just that." Civil Supplies Minister AK Sai J Saravanakumar, Transport Minister S Chandira Priyanga, Karaikal Collector L Mohamed Mansoor, Karaikal MLAs AMH Najim and M Nagathiyagarajan were present during the inaugural function.